

Dear Chairman Michael Powell et al,

As you debate the issue of further media deregulation, I beg you to use common sense and to strongly consider the impact that your decisions will have with regard to the American democracy.

Since the current Bush administration took control of the White House, we have already seen multiple instances in which the executive branch has abused its influence to curb the system of government checks and balances that define the American system. One troublesome example of this is the GAO lawsuit with regard to energy commission disclosure - and the administration's refusal to cooperate.

Governmental abuses are real, Mr. Powell. And they are nothing new to the current administration. But it is certainly true that the current administration has leveraged public events to create a degree of autonomy and secrecy that has taken the potential for abuse to a new level.

History has proven that the American media has served as an extremely effective watchdog against such abuse. This cannot be argued.

And within the last decade, we have seen an undeniable trend in which mainstream media has become less likely to research the details of breaking stories and has instead preferred to regurgitate the stories as dictated through press releases and public relations efforts. At best, such stories are written with a biased perspective. At worst, they may include an agenda that is counter to the population served by the media!

The responsibility to curb this trend - and to preserve the American media system as an asset to free speech and as a tool for effective public governance - falls squarely upon your shoulders.

The impact of allowing a handful of wealthy media barons to control the information flow within our great country almost certainly contributes to a scenario of Orwellian socialistic thought control.

Your decision, Mr. Powell, is not merely whether or not to allow further deregulation of an industry. Your decision is whether or not to allow further erosion to American democracy.

I hope you and your peers will have the courage to do the right thing.